



## DEAF SERVICES COMMISSION OF IOWA

Commission Meeting  
Friday, March 26, 2010  
Altoona Public Library  
Altoona, Iowa  
1:00-4:00 p.m.

The DSCI Commission Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Theresa Legg at 1:02 p.m., Friday, March 26, 2010, Altoona Public Library, Altoona, IA

Members present: Theresa Legg, Dr. James Grover, Gus Cordero, Jan Fletcher and Tammy Westhoff-Gentry

Members absent: Dr. Muhammad Chowdhry and Preston Daniels

Staff members present: Kathryn Baumann-Reese, Barbara Jones, Stephanie Lyons, and Linda Scott

Staff absent: Suzy Mannella

Interpreters: Mary Brandt, Joe Trelstad and Sue Tyrrell

Commissioners, staff and interpreters were introduced, visitors recognized and ground rules for the meeting presented.

### **Approval of Minutes from November 14, 2009:**

There being no changes to the minutes of the November 14, 2009 meeting, minutes stand approved as presented.

### **Commissioner/Committee Reports:**

Legg:

- attended a retreat at CSD headquarters in January
- will provide five (5) DVDs to DSCI's library on fire safety and how the deaf react to fire emergency situations. Will talk with Baumann-Reese about schools around the state who might receive the DVDs as well
- reminder that the CEPIN workshop (Community Emergency Preparedness Information Network) will be held in Ames, IA on Friday, April 16<sup>th</sup>. Workshop is at capacity
- CSD now has E-news on their website. Any Iowa news to be shared can be forwarded to Legg and she will see that the national office receives the information
- CSD of Iowa has hired a part-time staff person who signs

Cordero:

- because of funding, VR services have slowed down. Expects things to look better by summer with more people becoming employed
- will be taking the early retirement incentive package offered to state employees. Will leave state government on June 24<sup>th</sup> after 22 years with VR

Grover:

- reiterated what Cordero said about VR. All clients are on a waiting list, accounting for the slow down; they are not taking on new clients at the rate they used to
- the early retirement incentive will have an impact around the state and it could diminish services to their clients

Fletcher:

- helped two (2) deaf with the completion of Census information
- one other client has become frustrated with refusals to pay for interpreting services. Referred the individual to DSCI
- May Commission meeting will be her last. In June, she will be moving to Warren, Michigan on a job transfer. She plans on nominating herself to become a Commissioner on the Michigan Commission on Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Westhoff-Gentry:

- talked about her experience with a deaf client in a dissolution of marriage, exemplifying the importance of interpreting services outside the courtroom. Thinks she was able to advocate for the client and get resolution, but it just demonstrated, particularly if the issues had been more complex, what a disservice it was doing to the client who wasn't able to really have their needs met. This kept her motivation to continue to work with the legal system to get interpreters for meetings and non-court proceedings
- Volunteer Lawyer Project in Polk County committed to providing interpreter services for those qualifying for indigent services

### **Staff Reports:**

Lyons:

- discussed the DSCI website and upcoming Vlogs (video blogs) that will be placed on the site. The hope is to have 15-20 Vlogs available to the community to help answer their questions about our services. Any ideas, contact DSCI with subject matter

Jones:

- held a Deaf Deaf World workshop at Kirkwood Community College this month. Workshops are held at the College every spring and fall
- has been advocating for clients around the state

Baumann-Reese:

- Mannella at SE Polk High School in Pleasant Hill working at a Deaf Deaf World workshop
- the office now has video e-mail. Staff can receive VP messages on their computers and if they're unavailable, the community can sign their message and staff can see why they're calling and give them a call back. Consumers won't see staff faces, but will get text notifying them that they're not available and ask that they leave a message
- two (2) new Commissioners will be starting May 1, 2010. The Deaf Commissioner is Bob Vizzini from Cedar Rapids and the second is Dr. James Snyder, Dubuque, a new Hard of Hearing Commissioner. Dr. Chowdhry will be leaving the Commission April 30, 2010

### **Public Comment:**

None

**Old Business:**

**Volunteer Lawyer Project Update:**

Discussed earlier in the meeting.

**DHR Reorganization Update:**

Baumann-Reese:

- brief summary was given. The reorganization bill passed, has been signed by the Governor and effective immediately
- DHR will now become three Divisions – Community Action Agency (CAA), Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP) and Community and Advocacy Services (CAS). Seven (7) Commissions will come under CAS and will be known as Offices
- with reorganization there were two goals **1)** Director of DHR will make appointments of administrators of the three (3) divisions rather than the Governor with Legislative confirmation; **2)** Legislature wanted to reduce the number of Divisions from nine (9) to three (3) and that's been accomplished
- in the past, Administrators have served on a Human Rights Council. It's now being replaced with a Human Rights Board and each Commission will appoint one person to represent them on the Board
- Director has asked Baumann-Reese to take over temporary duties of the new Division. Mannella has become the Administrator's support/helper during this process
- Commissions will be scaled back to seven (7) members, with the exception of Native Americans. Terms will be extended from three (3) years to four (4) years

Dr. James Snyder asked what DSCI had in common with the other divisions?

Baumann-Reese explained that they have a lot in common. For example, Asian and Pacific Islanders(API)/Latino Affairs(LA)/DSCI all have interpreting issues. With resources shrinking, there's good reason for everyone to work together as they'll be stronger and better able to deal with some of the issues, like communication.

African Americans (AA)/LA/API/DSCI/Persons With Disabilities (PWD) all have youth programs and up to now they haven't collaborated, but they need work together to make the programs continue. Gave an example of JCP Camp and the Leadership Programs of PWD. LA/API/AA hold a Youth Congress and kids who have attended JCP Camp are now becoming a part of that program.

Feels we can work together when constituents come into the office and staff is not available. There needs to be backup and assistance rather than turning them away to come back another time.

Westhoff-Gentry asked if Baumann-Reese was in charge of more than just DSCI?

Baumann-Reese is in an *acting* capacity, helping with the transition, not supervising other employees. Once everything is in place, each office will have a primary person responsible for that office. Those people would not supervise, but could focus on working with their Commissions' and community's needs. The new Administrator would take on the responsibility of paperwork for those offices.

**Legislative Update:**

Baumann-Reese discussed Legislative issues that impact the department and its budget.

- a) Hearing Aid Bill did not make it through
- b) Deaf Children's Bill of Rights was filed, but too late. Will be taken up next year
- c) ASL as a foreign language K-12 failed – too costly
- d) SF2202 – changing the language to 216C - passed

**New Business:**

**Issues Committees Meet and Report Out:**

With two new Commissioners on board May 1, Administrator asked the Commissioners to suspend discussion until new members are present and they can make the decision on which committees they would like to serve and the work of those committees.

**MOTION #10-07:** Motion to postpone discussion of Issues Committees until the May 14, 2010 meeting. **Fletcher/Cordero**

Approved: 5  
Disapproved: 0  
Abstained: 0  
Motion passed.

**Commissioners' Terms Update:**

No further discussion than what took place earlier in the meeting.

**May 14, 2010 Commission Meeting:**

**MOTION #10-08:** Motion to hold the next Commission meeting on Friday, May 14, 2010 from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. **Fletcher/Cordero**

Approved: 5  
Disapproved: 0  
Abstained: 0  
Motion passed.

**Announcements/Adjournment:**

There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

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Theresa Legg, Chair

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Linda A. Scott, Secretary